

Senate File 2235 - Introduced

SENATE FILE 2235

BY BEHN

A BILL FOR

1 An Act relating to the education of students with
2 characteristics of dyslexia and to the preparation and
3 licensure of practitioners who provide such instruction, and
4 establishing an Iowa dyslexia board.
5 BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF IOWA:

1 Section 1. Section 256.7, subsection 3, Code 2020, is
2 amended to read as follows:

3 3. a. Prescribe standards and procedures for the approval
4 of practitioner preparation programs and professional
5 development programs offered in this state by practitioner
6 preparation institutions located within or outside this state
7 and by area education agencies.

8 b. Procedures provided for approval of programs shall
9 include procedures for enforcement of the prescribed standards
10 and, except as provided in [section 256.16, subsection 3](#), shall
11 not include a procedure for the waiving of any of the standards
12 prescribed.

13 c. By July 1, 2022, the board, in collaboration with the
14 Iowa reading research center, shall adopt rules under chapter
15 17A prescribing standards and procedures for the approval of
16 practitioner preparation programs that are affiliated with
17 the Iowa reading research center and that offer practitioner
18 preparation for the advanced dyslexia specialist endorsement
19 issued by the board of educational examiners pursuant to
20 section 272.2, subsection 23. The department shall not approve
21 programs that prepare practitioners for such an endorsement if
22 the programs are not affiliated with the Iowa reading research
23 center.

24 d. The board may establish by rule and collect from
25 practitioner preparation institutions located outside this
26 state an amount equivalent to the department's necessary
27 travel and actual expenses incurred while engaged in the
28 program approval process for the institution located outside
29 this state. Amounts collected under [this subsection](#) shall be
30 deposited in the general fund of the state.

31 Sec. 2. Section 256.9, Code 2020, is amended by adding the
32 following new subsection:

33 NEW SUBSECTION. 60. By July 1, 2024, dedicate at least one
34 of the department's authorized full-time equivalent positions
35 to maintain a dyslexia consultant to provide technical guidance

1 and assistance, including but not limited to professional
2 development, strategies, and materials, to the department, area
3 education agencies, school districts, and accredited nonpublic
4 schools relating to the identification of and instruction for
5 students with characteristics of dyslexia. The consultant
6 shall be highly trained in dyslexia and have a minimum of
7 three years of field experience in screening, identifying, and
8 treating dyslexia and related disorders.

9 Sec. 3. NEW SECTION. **256.32A Iowa dyslexia board.**

10 1. An Iowa dyslexia board is established to guide,
11 facilitate, and oversee implementation of dyslexia instruction
12 in Iowa and make recommendations for continued improvement of
13 such instruction. The Iowa dyslexia board shall also submit
14 recommendations as follows:

15 *a.* To the department regarding the required and preferred
16 qualifications for a dyslexia consultant position required in
17 accordance with section 256.9, subsection 60.

18 *b.* To the area education agencies regarding the required and
19 preferred qualifications for dyslexia specialists required in
20 accordance with section 273.2, subsection 11.

21 2. The Iowa dyslexia board shall consist of the following
22 members:

23 *a.* The director of the department or the director's
24 designee.

25 *b.* A representative of the Iowa reading research center.

26 *c.* A representative of an area education agency.

27 *d.* One school administrator.

28 *e.* One reading specialist.

29 *f.* One special education teacher.

30 *g.* An elementary core literacy teacher.

31 *h.* Two representatives of decoding dyslexia who are parents
32 of children with dyslexia.

33 *i.* One representative of decoding dyslexia who is an
34 individual with dyslexia.

35 *j.* One provider certified in a structured literacy reading

1 program.

2 *k.* One psychologist or speech language pathologist licensed
3 in the state of Iowa with experience in diagnosing dyslexia.

4 *l.* A representative of an institution of higher education
5 in Iowa with documented expertise in dyslexia and reading
6 instruction.

7 *m.* The department dyslexia consultant if maintained by the
8 department pursuant to section 256.9, subsection 60.

9 3. The term of membership is three years. The terms shall
10 be staggered so that at least four of the terms end each year,
11 but no member serving on the initial board shall serve less
12 than one year. The governor shall determine the length of the
13 initial terms of office.

14 4. The Iowa dyslexia board shall submit its findings and
15 recommendations in a report to the general assembly by November
16 15 annually.

17 Sec. 4. Section 272.2, Code 2020, is amended by adding the
18 following new subsection:

19 NEW SUBSECTION. 23. By July 1, 2021, adopt rules pursuant
20 to chapter 17A, developed in collaboration with the Iowa
21 reading research center, establishing an advanced dyslexia
22 specialist endorsement. The endorsement shall require a
23 strong understanding of structured literacy instruction; the
24 neurobiological nature, cognitive-linguistic correlates,
25 developmental indicators, compensatory behaviors, potential
26 psychological factors, and co-occurring disorders of dyslexia;
27 demonstrated skill in administering informal and formal
28 assessments related to dyslexia; demonstrated skill in delivery
29 of explicit, systematic literacy intervention; demonstrated
30 skill in developing and supporting services for students
31 with characteristics of dyslexia including those who are
32 eligible for services under chapter 256B or section 504 of
33 the federal Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. §794, as
34 amended; demonstrated skill in the design and implementation
35 of accommodations and modifications; demonstrated competence

1 in creating a dyslexia-friendly learning environment; and
2 demonstrated skill in the use and integration of assistive
3 technology. This endorsement shall, at a minimum, require
4 three years of prior teaching experience and completion of a
5 supervised practical experience.

6 Sec. 5. Section 273.2, Code 2020, is amended by adding the
7 following new subsection:

8 NEW SUBSECTION. 11. Subject to an appropriation by the
9 general assembly for such purpose, the area education agency
10 board shall, by July 1, 2024, dedicate at least one full-time
11 equivalent position to maintain a dyslexia specialist. The
12 area education agency board may hire such a specialist or may
13 provide appropriate training to qualify an existing employee
14 as a specialist on dyslexia. The specialist shall provide
15 technical guidance and assistance, including but not limited
16 to professional development, strategies, and materials to
17 school districts and accredited nonpublic schools relating
18 to identification of and instruction for students with
19 characteristics of dyslexia. The specialist shall be highly
20 trained in dyslexia and have a minimum of three years of field
21 experience in screening, identifying, and treating dyslexia and
22 related disorders. In the absence of an appropriation, each
23 area education agency board is encouraged to employ a highly
24 qualified dyslexia specialist.

25 Sec. 6. Section 273.3, Code 2020, is amended by adding the
26 following new subsection:

27 NEW SUBSECTION. 25. Require, by July 1, 2024, any person
28 employed by the area education agency who holds a license,
29 certificate, statement of recognition, or authorization
30 other than a coaching authorization, issued by the board of
31 educational examiners under chapter 272, to complete the Iowa
32 reading research center dyslexia overview module. Such persons
33 employed after July 1, 2024, shall complete the module within
34 one year of the employee's initial date of hire.

35 Sec. 7. Section 279.68, subsection 2, paragraph d,

1 subparagraph (3), subparagraph division (a), Code 2020, is
2 amended to read as follows:

3 (a) Assists students who are persistently at risk in reading
4 to develop the skills to read at grade level. Assistance
5 shall include but not be limited to strategies that formally
6 address dyslexia, when appropriate. For purposes of this
7 subparagraph division (a), "*dyslexia*" means a specific and
8 ~~significant impairment in the development of reading, including~~
9 ~~but not limited to phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency,~~
10 ~~vocabulary, and comprehension, that is not solely accounted~~
11 ~~for by intellectual disability, sensory learning disability~~
12 ~~or impairment, or lack of appropriate instruction that is~~
13 neurobiological in origin, is characterized by difficulties
14 with accurate or fluent word recognition and by poor spelling
15 and decoding abilities, and may include difficulties that
16 typically result from a deficit in the phonological component
17 of language that is often unexpected in relation to other
18 cognitive abilities and the provision of effective classroom
19 instruction, as well as secondary consequences such as problems
20 in reading comprehension and reduced reading experience that
21 can impede growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

22 Sec. 8. NEW SECTION. **279.72 Training on dyslexia.**

23 By July 1, 2024, the board of directors of a school district
24 shall require all persons employed by the school district who
25 hold a teaching license or endorsement for special education or
26 prekindergarten through grade three levels issued under chapter
27 272 to complete the Iowa reading research center dyslexia
28 overview module. Such persons employed by the school district
29 after July 1, 2024, shall complete the module within one year
30 of the employee's initial date of hire.

31 Sec. 9. STATE MANDATE FUNDING SPECIFIED. In accordance
32 with section 25B.2, subsection 3, the state cost of requiring
33 compliance with any state mandate included in this Act shall
34 be paid by a school district from state school foundation aid
35 received by the school district under section 257.16. This

1 specification of the payment of the state cost shall be deemed
2 to meet all of the state funding-related requirements of
3 section 25B.2, subsection 3, and no additional state funding
4 shall be necessary for the full implementation of this Act
5 by and enforcement of this Act against all affected school
6 districts.

7 EXPLANATION

8 The inclusion of this explanation does not constitute agreement with
9 the explanation's substance by the members of the general assembly.

10 This bill relates to the education of students with
11 characteristics of dyslexia and to the preparation and
12 licensure of practitioners who provide instruction to such
13 students, and establishes an Iowa dyslexia board.

14 STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION — PRACTITIONER PREPARATION
15 INSTITUTIONS. The bill requires the state board of education,
16 in collaboration with the Iowa reading research center,
17 to adopt rules by July 1, 2022, prescribing standards and
18 procedures for the approval of practitioner preparation
19 programs that are affiliated with the Iowa reading research
20 center and that offer practitioner preparation for the
21 advanced dyslexia specialist endorsement issued by the board of
22 educational examiners. The bill prohibits the department of
23 education from approving programs that prepare practitioners
24 for such an endorsement if the programs are not affiliated with
25 the Iowa reading research center.

26 DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION — DYSLEXIA CONSULTANT. The
27 director of the department must, by July 1, 2024, maintain
28 a dyslexia consultant to provide technical guidance and
29 assistance, including but not limited to professional
30 development, strategies, and materials, to the department, area
31 education agencies, school districts, and accredited nonpublic
32 schools relating to the identification of and instruction for
33 students with characteristics of dyslexia.

34 IOWA DYSLEXIA BOARD. An Iowa dyslexia board is established
35 to guide, facilitate, and oversee implementation of dyslexia

1 instruction in Iowa and make recommendations for continued
2 improvement of such instruction. The bill lists the
3 recommendations the board is required to make to the department
4 and area education agencies.

5 Membership on the board consists of persons representing the
6 department, the Iowa reading research center, area education
7 agencies, practitioners, decoding dyslexia, a structured
8 literacy reading program, dyslexia diagnosticians, and higher
9 education. Members serve staggered three-year terms.

10 The board shall submit its findings and recommendations in a
11 report to the general assembly by November 15 annually.

12 BOARD OF EDUCATIONAL EXAMINERS — ENDORSEMENT. By July
13 1, 2021, the board of educational examiners must adopt
14 rules, developed in collaboration with the Iowa reading
15 research center, establishing an advanced dyslexia specialist
16 endorsement. The bill identifies the skill, knowledge, and
17 experience requirements that must be met before the endorsement
18 may be issued to an applicant.

19 AREA EDUCATION AGENCIES — PERSONNEL REQUIREMENTS. Subject
20 to an appropriation by the general assembly for such purpose,
21 each area education agency must, by July 1, 2024, maintain
22 a dyslexia specialist. The specialists may be hired or an
23 existing employee may be provided the appropriate training to
24 qualify as a dyslexia specialist. The specialist must provide
25 technical guidance and assistance to school districts and
26 accredited nonpublic schools relating to identification of and
27 instruction for students with characteristics of dyslexia. In
28 the absence of an appropriation, each area education agency is
29 encouraged to employ a highly qualified dyslexia specialist.

30 By July 1, 2024, any person employed by an area education
31 agency who holds a license, certificate, authorization other
32 than a coaching authorization, or statement of recognition
33 issued by the board of educational examiners must complete the
34 Iowa reading research center dyslexia overview module. Such
35 persons employed after July 1, 2024, must complete the module

1 within one year of the employee's initial date of hire.

2 SCHOOL DISTRICTS — K-3 STUDENT READING PROGRESSION AND
3 TRAINING. The bill modifies the definition of "dyslexia" used
4 for purposes of the assistance school districts must provide
5 to students who are persistently at risk in reading to develop
6 the skills to read at grade level. Under the bill, "dyslexia"
7 means a specific learning disability that is neurobiological
8 in origin, is characterized by difficulties with accurate or
9 fluent word recognition and by poor spelling and decoding
10 abilities, and may include difficulties that typically result
11 from a deficit in the phonological component of language that
12 is often unexpected in relation to other cognitive abilities
13 and the provision of effective classroom instruction, as
14 well as secondary consequences such as problems in reading
15 comprehension and reduced reading experience that can impede
16 growth of vocabulary and background knowledge.

17 By July 1, 2024, all persons employed by a school district
18 who hold a teaching license or endorsement for special
19 education or prekindergarten through grade three levels must
20 complete the Iowa reading research center dyslexia overview
21 module. Such persons employed by the school district after
22 July 1, 2024, shall complete the module within one year of the
23 employee's initial date of hire.

24 The bill may include a state mandate as defined in Code
25 section 25B.3. The bill requires that the state cost of
26 any state mandate included in the bill be paid by a school
27 district from state school foundation aid received by the
28 school district under Code section 257.16. The specification
29 is deemed to constitute state compliance with any state mandate
30 funding-related requirements of Code section 25B.2. The
31 inclusion of this specification is intended to reinstate the
32 requirement of political subdivisions to comply with any state
33 mandates included in the bill.